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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY QQ DATE 25 JUN 1982
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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 4688
E.O. 12065: NA
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: THE COUP PLOT: REACTIONS IN ITS AFTERMATH
REFS: (A) KINGSTON 4599 (B) KINGSTON 4619 (C) KINGSTON 4623
1. SUMMARY: STATEMENTS ABOUT THE GROUP WHO WERE PLOTTING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA CAME FROM SEVERAL OFFICIALS AND GROUPS IN THE WAKE OF THE JUNE 22 ARREST OF THE CONSPIRATORS. THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE JAMAICAN MILITARY DESCRIBED THE NATURE OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE ARRESTS AND REAFFIRMED THE LOYALTY OF THE MILITARY. THE POLICE ISSUED A STATEMENT DENYING ANY POLICE OFFICERS WERE INVOLVED. THE OPPOSITION RELEASED A STATEMENT DENOUNCING THE CONSPIRACY WHILE QUESTIONING THE TIMING OF ITS REVELATION, WARNING THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO TRY TO USE IT FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL PURPOSES, AND DENYING ANY INVOLVEMENT. A MULTITUDE OF LEFTIST GROUPS AND LEADERS ISSUED STATEMENTS CONDEMNING THE CONSPIRACY AND LINKING IT TO THE FORCES OF REACTION. END SUMMARY.
2. THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE JAMAICAN DEFENSE FORCE (JDF),
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BRIGADIER ROBERT NEISH, ISSUED A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE DETENTION ON JUNE 22 OF 29 PERSONS ON CHARGES OF PLOTTING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT. JAMAICA'S HIGHEST RANKING MILITARY OFFICER MADE SEVERAL IMPORTANT POINTS A). THE DETENTION CAME AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF INVESTIGATION BY THE JDF AND "WERE NOT PROMPTED BY ANY FOREIGN OR EXTERNAL CONNECTION WHATSOEVER WHETHER BY INFORMATION OR OTHERWISE." B). THE JDF WILL WITHOLD THE NAMES OF THE PERSONS DETAINED IN ORDER NOT TO PREJUDICE THEIR FUTURE ON THE ISLAND IN THE EVENT THAT THEY ARE NOT GUILTY OF ANY OFFENSE. C) THE JDF THE JDF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RULE OF LAW. D) THE DECISION TO DETAIN THE CONSPIRATORS WAS TAKEN ONLY AFTER COMPLETE CONSULTATIONS AMONG THE PRIME MINISTER, THE ACTING MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND BRIGADIER NEISH. E) THE INVESTIGATION INTO
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THE CASE IS NOT YET COMPLETE AND NO CHARGES WILL BE BROUGHT UNTIL THE POLICE WORK IS FINISHED.

F) THE DETNETIONS WERE ACCOMPLISHED WITH NO SHOOTING NOR ANY INJURIES. THE BRIGADIER CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS BY CALLING ON THE PRESS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO REFRAIN FROM SPECULATION AND RUMOR SPREADING.

3. THE JAMAICA CONSTABULARY FORCE (JCF) STATEMENT DENIED THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE POLICE FORCE WAS INVOLVED IN THE ALLEGED CONSPIRACY. THE STATEMENT CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THREE CIVILIANS WERE DETAINED IN CONNECTION WITH THE INVESTIGATIONS, INCLUDING H.CHARLES JOHNSON, LEADER OF THE MINUSCULE JAMAICA UNITED FRONT.

4. THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY'S (JLP) PRESS RELEASE ON THE ALLEGED CONSPIRACY ROUNDLY CONDEMNS THE ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT AND OFFERS THE PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR "ANY GENUINE, CONSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO CRUSH ANY SUCH ATTEMPT."

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THE OPPOSITIONS STATEMENT POINTS OUT THAT THE JLP WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO JOIN A PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT AS ALL THE POLLS, INCLUDING ONE CONDUCTED BY THE PNP, SHOW THEM WITH "AN UNASSAILABLE MARGIN OF POPULAR SUPPORT." WHILE SETTING FORTH THE JLP'S OPPOSITION TO UN-CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS OF OVERTURNING THE GOVERNMENT, THE STATEMENT DOES QUESTION THE TIMING OF THE DISCLOUSRE OF THE PLOT. CLAIMING THAT MANLEY'S SPEECH PRECEDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN A "DEVIOUS AND MALICIOUS ATTEMPT TO ASSOCIATE THE JLP WITH SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES," THE OPPOSITION WARNED THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ATTEMPTING TO ORCHESTRATE A SITUATION IN WHICH A STATE OF EMERGENCY COULD BE DECLARED AND FOREIGN TROOPS COULD BE INVITED IN TO "SUPRESS THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE."

5. THE CANA-REUTER NEWS AGENCY CARRIED A REPORT THAT OPPOSITION LEADER EDWARD SEAGA, WHO WAS OFF THE ISLAND ON A TRIP TO THE U.S., EXPRESSED HIS DEEP SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE ALLEGED COUP PLOT. WHILE ADMITTING THAT A CONSPIRACY COULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE, SEAGA WARNED THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO ATTEMPT TO USE THE INCIDENT AS A POLITICAL WEAPON AGAINST THE JLP. THE JLP LEADER SUGGESTED, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THAT THE WHOLE INCIDENT COULD BE USED TO DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY. SEAGA REPORTEDLY DECLARED THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD DEFY ANY SUCH DECLARATION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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6. MOST OF THE WELL-KNOWN LEFTIST ORGNIZATIONS HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE ALLEGED PLOT. AMONG THESE ARE THE WORKERS PARTY OF JAMAICA, THE JAMAICA UNION OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH, THE PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION, THE PRESS ASSOCIATION OF JAMAICA, AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF JAMAICA. ALL OF THESE STATEMENTS CAN BE LINKED TO THE ONGOING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. IN ADDITION TO DENOUNCING THE CONSPIRACY, THE STATEMENTS VARIOUSLY ASK FOR THE RECALL FROM CUBA OF THE ERSTWHILE SECURITY MINISTER DUDLEY THOMPSON OR ATTEMPT TO IMPLICATE THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, THE DAILY GLEANER, THE UNITED STATES, OR IMPERIALIST FORCES IN THE PLOT.
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